

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2298/99  
by Elisa Damião (PSE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Future of the textile industry in the European Union

The textile industry, which employs some 2.5 million people in Member States, is the EU's main export sector, accounting for ECU 180 bn. In the last ten years its volume of production has dropped by around 10% and, according to Euratex, approximately one million jobs were lost in the same period. This has been caused by cheap imports.

The sector has been going through a serious crisis since 1997, with annual output shrinking by as much as 3.3% in 1999. It is estimated that it will make a slow recovery, with an increase in output of 2.7% in 2000.

Given that Commissioner Pascal Lamy has examined the possibility of EU action to support other sectors such as agriculture, will the Commission state what measures it intends to take to help this sector which is vitally important to the EU, in particular with regard to the following:

- in the context of the WTO negotiations, the decisions of the Uruguay Round, whose incorrect application has been to the detriment of regions exclusively dependent on the textile industry;
- promotion of a label to guarantee consumer protection and certify that products have been manufactured in compliance with labour laws, thereby ensuring that the WTO members' economies develop on a fair and sustainable basis and safeguarding intellectual property rights, which implies taking action to combat fraud in this as in other areas.